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ABSTRACT

The issue of radiating impact, particularly in the area of the dissemination of social innovations, is a phenomenon of considerable interest. Several case studies reported in the literature have questioned the ability of model demonstration projects to make a substantial impact on the systems within which they operate. The generalization of a model diversion program was observed following the transference of operational supervision to an existing community organization. Data documenting the restructuring of the model following dissemination were collected from a sample of 23 delinquent juveniles randomly assigned to treatment conditions, and 23 undergraduate volunteers who served as project change agents trained in the techniques of behavior contracting and child advocacy. Delinquent youth were randomly matched to volunteers, who were supervised under two conditions, i.e., by graduate project staff or by county court staff. Results suggested that the influence of the county court staff member serving in a supervisory role had a substantial impact on the model diversion project. (Author)

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Community Organizations as Systemic Change:

Does A Rose of Another Name Smell as Sweet?

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A phenomena of considerable conceptual concern to community psychologists has been the radiating impact of planned interventions (Kelly, 1971). Briefly stated, this issue has focused on the problem of producing desired change at one organizational level (i.e., organizational change) as a function of a planned intervention at another level (i.e., individual change; Heller & Monahan, 1977). The other authors participating in the symposium have discussed this issue of radiating impact within the context of planned interventions at the individual level and related change at the organizational level as well as the impact on individuals of legislative or policy level changes. The issue of radiating impact is of paramount concern in the dissemination process as well. The current paper will attempt to further dissect this phenomena of radiating impact by viewing the issue from the perspective of an adopting organization's impact on the intervention process following dissemination.

Research projects must be viewed from the proper temporal perspective. Sarason (1972) coined the phrase "before the beginning" to refer to the processes in the natural history of an organizational setting that led to its creation.

In a similar vein, the impact of an organization cannot be truly realized without looking at "after the end" (Rappaport, Seidman, & Davidson, 1979).

These concepts are particularly applicable to social scientists, such as ourselves, who are a good deal invested in this social innovation-dissemination model of conducting research. The model calls for the development of an innovative technology in response to an existant social problem. The effectiveness of this new technology is then determined through the evaluation of a demonstration project. If the demonstration project (and typically some systematic replication) proves to have impact on alleviating the given social problem, the technology then becomes accepted practice. In other words, the model ultimately calls for

the dissemination of the innovation and/or information about the innovation to individuals and organizations that have contact with the social problem. However, increased concern is being felt about the amount of return on the investment made in this model (Williams, 1976). The bulk of this concern lies with the inefficient utilization of information by appropriate agencies in the social services sector. All too frequently adopting organizations re-invent the innovation as they incorporate it into their formal structure. Though the degree to which an adopting organization might implement an innovation might vary for many reasons, the critical components of the original innovation might also be lost. The issue of degree of implementation and the related outcome results at the level of the adopting organization have too frequently been overlooked.

It is within the context of this "after the end" process that this paper shall address the notion of radiating impact. The current research can be seen as an example of a major problem facing the research and development model currently in vogue in the social sciences. More specifically, at issue is the generalization of the activities of a model diversion program (Davidson, 1976; Davidson, Seidman, Rappaport, Berck, Rapp, Rhodes & Herring, 1977) following the transference of operational supervision to an existing community agency.

Historical Perspective

In the early 1970's, a program was developed by Rappaport and his colleagues to provide an alternative to the juvenile justice system for adolescents in legal jeopardy (Rappaport, Seidman, & Davidson, 1979). Youth that would normally have been petitioned to the juvenile court were referred to the program by local police departments. Following the demonstration phase of the project that produced extremely positive results, a county funded agency, whose sole purpose was to provide outreach services to youth in order to prevent delinquent activity, took over responsibility of the project.

In this case study example of the dissemination process in action, it was

apparent that there was little radiating impact. That is, there was little systemic change. The authors themselves concluded that; "indeed, the project still goes on and provides useful services to youths... But the program has changed. Perhaps what has changed is the essence of the program." (Rappaport, Seidman, & Davidson, 1979, p. 122-123). They went on to suggest that: "This is, in our view, a powerful case study of the impossibility of creating social change by demonstration projects alone." (p. 126).

Typically, evaluations of innovative technologies merely ask the question "Does it work?" The more complex question of what components of the model are responsible for the desired outcome are seldom addressed (Emshoff, Davidson, Schmitt, & Leedom, 1980). This unfortunate state of affairs, coupled with the observation that adopting organizations frequently don't adopt the innovation per se, but in fact adapt the technology (Charters & Jones, 1973), leads one to the conclusion that "...tinkering with the innovation may affect the critical components responsible for its success" (Emshoff, et al., 1980, p. 2). The current research, that is ultimately a direct descendent of the earlier work conducted by Rappaport and his colleagues, attempted to continue this exploration of the dissemination process. More specifically, within the confines of a true experimental design, we attempted to assess the extent to which an adopting organization re-invents the innovation.

Method

The intervention and research issues raised above were addressed in a delinquency prevention study taking place within the context of a five year research project funded by NIMH. A local county juvenile court serving a medium sized mid-western city served as the referral source of delinquent youth.

Youth Referred

Twenty-three youth were involved in the research during 1978 and 1979. The youth averaged 14.5 years of age. They were two-thirds white and roughly two-thirds

male. All socioeconomic strata were represented; however, lower and middle income groups were predominant. Petitions on referred youth included those for minor and serious misdemeanors as well as minor felonies. Status offenders were not referred to the program. The youth were randomly assigned to treatment conditions.

Nonprofessional volunteers

Eleven male and twelve female undergraduates at a large midwestern university served as project change agents. These volunteers were, for the most part, social science majors in psychology or criminal justice. Students were committed to a three term (year-long) involvement in the project and received course credit for their participation. Students were randomly selected from a large pool of those interested in project involvement and were randomly assigned to intervention conditions.

Procedure

Students in both experimental conditions received training in the techniques of behavior contracting (Stuart, 1971) and child advocacy (Davidson & Rapp, 1976). All students received eight weeks of intense training in these skills from graduate student staff members of the project.

Following training, the remaining two terms (6 months) were spent in direct provision of services to referred youth. Youth were randomly matched to volunteers within conditions with the exception that male volunteers were not matched with female youth. Student volunteers were instructed to spend an average of six to eight hours a week on their case. The actual duration of the intervention period was 5.1 months, or roughly 18 school weeks.

The two intervention conditions differed in the following manner. Those students in the project condition continued to be supervised by graduate student project staff members. Those in the court condition were supervised by a county court staff member following their training. In both instances classes continued to meet in small groups of six. Supervision sessions met on a weekly basis for

two and a half hours, allowing ample time for individualized instruction and close supervision of intervention activities.

It was felt that the court condition should represent an excellent example of a typical dissemination setting with the added insight provided by the identically trained or common volunteer pool. In that sense, intervention differences should be to a great extent due to the influence of the traditional institution, the juvenile court, as expressed by the supervisory input of the court staff supervisor to the volunteers.

Measures

Due to the focus of the current discussion on the impact of the court system upon the model diversion program, the presentation of results were appropriately limited. Outcome measures were restricted to the assessment of whether or not the youth had any contact with the juvenile authorities subsequent to their project referral. This was seen as a dichotomization of success versus failure.

Process measures served an important role in evaluating the impact of the court system on the intervention model. Each youth, one of his/her parents, and the undergraduate volunteer were interviewed at three points during the intervention interval. The intervention period was divided into three equal parts and the interviews were conducted at the end of each interval. Several process scales, developed through a rational-empirical method (Jackson, 1971), were utilized with this data set. The reliability and validity properties of these scales have been discussed elsewhere (Davidson, 1976; Kantrowitz, Davidson, Blakely, & Kushler, 1978). These process measures were intended to monitor and describe the intervention process across time and provide a measure of the volunteers' adherence to the intervention model.

Analysis

The difference between the conditions on the outcome criteria was assessed using a simple chi-square. The process scales were subjected to a repeated-measures

analysis of variance across three time periods. The results were further broken down using Scheffé comparisons.

Results

The outcome results (the dichotomous success/failure criterion) are presented in Table one. Two of the eleven project condition youth recidivated during their formal involvement in the project (project failures). Of the twelve youth in the court condition, six had contacts with the juvenile justice system subsequent to their referral to the project (court failures). Though the difference appears substantial, the chi square was not significant ($p < .11$).

The process results were extremely interesting. Of particular interest was a recurring pattern that emerged on several of their scales. The court successes tended to be involved in their intervention activities to a lesser extent than the court group failures or the project group successes or failures. The court failures, on the other hand, tended to become much more active. This trend is evident (to differing degrees) in all four of the tables of cell means presented (see Tables 2, 3, 4, & 5).

The scale assessing the average amount of time that the volunteers invested in their cases demonstrated that there were no significant condition differences. It was the case, however, that those volunteers working with youth that did not come into contact with the formal juvenile justice system (successes) spent more time on their case than did those volunteers working with youth that got into further trouble during their involvement with the project ($F = 7.37, p < .02$).

The peer involvement scale provided further evidence for this trend, particularly with respect to the tendency for the court condition failures to become more involved. The volunteers in this cell were more involved with the youth's peers than the mean of the court successes and the project successes and failures ($F = 7.39, p < .01$).

The scale assessing the extent of involvement in recreational activities

yielded significant main effects for condition, success/failure and time, as well as several interaction effects (see Table 2), volunteers in both cells of the court condition (successes and failures) tended to increase their recreational activity over time and were consistently higher than both project condition groups. Those volunteers involved in successful cases (no official contact with the police or court on the part of the youth), in general, tended to be more involved in recreational activities than did volunteers in nonsuccessful cases. This disparity tended to increase over time in the project condition. However, due to the extremely high level of recreational activities in the court failure condition, this success/failure difference did not show up in the court condition.

Table 3 shows the amount of intervention activity focused on legal system involvement. The volunteers in the court group failures cell showed considerably more activity in the legal system than did volunteers in any of the other cells ($F=6.13$, $p<.01$).

A scale assessing interventions focused on modifying the school situation clearly demonstrated the recurrent pattern noted above. The highest activity level was noted in the court failure cell while a drop was apparent in both the project successes and failures (see Table 4).

The scale assessing contracting activities again showed the prominent pattern of high activity on the part of the court group failures (see Table 5). Though the overall main effects and interaction terms were not significant, several Scheffe comparisons did yield some significant findings. The project condition successes showed a significant increase in contracting activities from time one to time two ($F=11.90$, $p<.01$) and a nonsignificant drop to time three. The project condition failures showed a similar trend, though, to a much lesser extent. The court condition successes increased their contracting activities over time, but not significantly. The court failures decreased their contracting over time.

Discussion

It is apparent that the influence of the juvenile court staff member serving in a supervisory role, had a substantial impact on the model diversion project. In an overall sense, this was evidenced in the trend recurring throughout most of the intervention process scales. The trend clearly showed a flip by condition of the pattern of successes versus failures across time. In the project condition, the successes typically showed the greater amount of intervention activity (excluding the legal system involvement scale). The reverse was true of the court condition. Generally the court failures showed a greater amount of intervention related activities.

These trends can be related more specifically to the intervention model as it was intended to unfold. The general model called for an initial assessment period of several weeks. During this period, the volunteers spent the bulk of their time getting to know the youth, significant others in the youth's life, and general goals to work toward during the intervention period. During the first several weeks it was frequently the case that a good deal of time was spent in recreational activities allowing for interpersonal interaction necessary in the assessment phase. Following this phase, more detailed intervention goals were specified and actual intervention related activities increased substantially. During the last several weeks of the intervention period, the volunteers gradually reduced their direct involvement in intervention related activities and increasingly returned control of the situation back to the youth and family. Throughout the intervention interval, the youth and family were gradually encouraged to advocate on their own behalf and negotiate their own behavioral contracts with less and less input from the volunteer. During this period, intervention activities on the part of the volunteer were expected to decrease somewhat and the recreational activities to perhaps rise again.

The trends in the data showing the volunteers recreational activities with the youth dramatically displayed the disparity between the conditions in terms of

adherence to the intervention model (see Table 2). In general, the court condition volunteers spent a greater proportion of time in recreational activities than did the project condition volunteers ($F=9.07$, $p<.01$; recall, that the volunteers in the two conditions do not spend a differential amount of time in case related activities). Those in the project success cell showed a high level of recreational activity during the first third of the intervention period (Time 1) followed by a nearly significant drop to Time 2 and a significant rise again to Time 3 ($F=10.81$, $p<.01$). This trend corresponds well with the intention of the model as there was a good deal of recreational activity occurring during the assessment interval followed by a drop off during the most critical intervention weeks and another rise in activity as the case moved toward termination. The project failures again showed the drop in recreational activity from Time 1 to Time 2 ($F=4.89$, $p<.01$), but the drop continued on to termination (Time 3). This is perhaps due to the increased demands placed on these cases due to the additional contact with the legal system inherent in the failures.

The court group, on the other hand, showed a relatively stable pattern across both the success and failure cells, not only did the court condition volunteers spend a greater proportion of time in recreational activities, but they maintained this higher rate across time. The curves in Table 2 do not correspond with the trend theoretically anticipated given the specific nature of the intervention model.

The project success group clearly followed the expected pattern of moderate intervention activity during the first time interval, followed by an increase in activity at Time 2. Typically, the activity rate decreased to Time 3. These trends were evident in the school and contracting scales (see Tables 4 & 5) and corresponded well with the drop and subsequent rise in recreational related activities. The project failures followed a similar pattern through the second time period, however, they frequently continued the increase in intervention related activity through Time 3 and maintained a lower level of recreational activities.

Again, this is probably related to the increased need to deal with the crisis situation and intervene in the appropriate areas on the youth's behalf.

These trends were not typically apparent in the court condition. The successes generally increased over time right through the termination interval when activities should have decreased (see Table 5) while the failures showed the overall increased level of activity (see Tables 4 & 5). One hypothesis that might explain the level of activity in the court failure cell lies in the tendency for court staff to focus the bulk of their attention on cases where there are in fact current problems. Perhaps this is due to the oversized case loads that the typical probation officer must endure. In any case, it is apparent that this increased activity level was related to the differential supervision that existed in the court group. The court failures tended to spend a little more time on their cases and were somewhat more recreationally orientated (see Table 2). They were also more likely to be involved in specific intervention related activities than were the court successes (see Table 5).

In interpreting these findings it is crucial to recall the differences in the intervention conditions. The volunteers were all trained by project staff in the same skills, using the same materials. Both the youth and volunteers were randomly assigned to intervention conditions and the two were randomly matched. Following the training, half of the volunteers were supervised by court staff. The remaining half were supervised by project staff. They all came from the same pool, intervened in the same community settings, at the same time, etc. Yet, differential intervention activities were consistently noted across several process scales designed specifically to monitor the intervention process across time. Perhaps equally important were the outcome results. Though the Chi-square was not significant, 18% of the project youth recidivated while a full 50% of the court youth recidivated (see Table 1). The issue here is what components of the innovation did the court group adopt. The volunteers did implement the intervention

strategies to some extent. What they failed to do was maintain an investment in the philosophy of the diversion model. They continued to petition youth to the juvenile court. In short, diversion was not their business. Though they practiced some of the project intervention strategies, second order change was not achieved (Seidman, 1975; Rappaport, 1977). The change was, for the most part, superficial in nature (first order change). There was little or no systemic impact apparent. If we cannot produce similar results in a dissemination effort this minimally removed from the original innovation, who are we kidding when we suggest that dissemination efforts through traditional workshops all across the country will have any hope whatsoever in incorporating the essential ingredients of the innovation within the daily operating structure of adopting organizations.

In summary, dissemination research has typically focused on the strategies of persuading organizations to adopt the innovation. The fact that this objective can be accomplished given the requisite amount of effort has frequently been addressed in the literature (Fairweather, 1967; Fairweather, Sanders, & Tornatzky, 1974). However, it is apparent that this is an insufficient step in the overall model. Observers are increasingly questioning the return on the federal investment in research and development in the social sciences. The issue of the effectiveness of this dissemination model, both in terms of the degree to which the innovation is implemented by adopting organizations and in terms of outcome data at the level of adopting organizations is just now beginning to receive its due attention (Emshoff et al., 1980). However, accompanying this observation is the overwhelming awareness of the lack of rigorous research on how to insure the most efficient utilization of social innovations. Increased attention must be paid to the manner in which adopting organizations re-invent the innovation as it is adapted to the demands of their organizational structure. Though the current research has taken but a small step in the direction of pinpointing the extent of this problem, it has clearly suggested the presence of a substantial

problem inherent in the dissemination phase of the current model for conducting research in the social sciences.

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TABLE 1

Official Outcome:
Dichotomous Success/Failure

		OUTCOME	
		SUCCESS	FAILURE
Project Experimental Condition	Court	9	2
		6	6
		15	8
			23

$$\phi = .33$$

$$\chi^2 = .72 \quad p < .11$$

TABLE 2
Recreational Activities

		1	2	3
Project	Success	3.37	2.96	3.78
	Failure	2.67	1.50	1.34
Court	Success	3.67	3.70	4.00
	Failure	3.56	3.39	3.83

Analysis of Variance

Source	Df	MS	F	Prob.
Condition (C)	1	15.03	9.01	.007
Success (S)	1	9.52	5.71	.027
C x S	1	5.73	3.44	.079
Replication (R)	19	1.67		
Time (T)	2	.88	3.16	.054
C x T	2	.78	2.79	.074
T x S	2	.85	3.05	.059
C x T x S	2	.78	2.79	.074
R x T	38	.28		

TABLE 3
Interventions in the Legal System

Project		1	2	3
		1.06	1.00	1.02
	Failure	1.09	1.14	1.05
Court	Success	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Failure	1.30	1.72	1.67

Analysis of Variance

<u>Source</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Prob.</u>
Condition (C)	1	.64	2.04	.17
Success (S)	1	1.5	4.01	.06
C x S	1	.80	2.55	.13
Replication (R)	19	.31		
Time (T)	2	.05	1.06	.36
C x T	2	.07	1.61	.21
T x S	2	.08	1.77	.18
C x T x S	2	.04	.98	.39
R x T	38	.04		

TABLE 4

Interventions Focused on Modifying
the School Situation

Project		1	2	3
		1.09	1.57	1.43
	Success	1.73	1.09	1.00
	Failure			
Court	Success	1.57	1.36	2.00
	Failure	2.01	2.13	2.30

Analysis of Variance

<u>Source</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Prob.</u>
Condition (C)	1	3.11	1.62	.22
Success (S)	1	.18	.10	.76
C x S	1	.18	.96	.34
Replication (R)	19	1.92		
Time (T)	2	.15	.91	.41
C x T	2	.15	4.14	.02
T x S	2	.13	.80	.46
C x T x S	2	.24	1.44	.25
R x T	38	.17		

TABLE 5

Contracting Intervention Activities

		1	2	3
Project	Success	1.40	2.67	2.25
	Failure	1.26	1.33	1.22
Court	Success	1.23	1.47	1.99
	Failure	2.45	2.38	1.95

Analysis of Variance

<u>Source</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Prob.</u>
Condition (C)	1	.63	.21	.65
Success (S)	1	.06	.02	.89
C x S	1	7.49	2.50	.13
Replication (R)	19	3.00		
Time (T)	2	.64	1.06	.36
C x T	2	.36	.60	.55
T x S	2	1.30	2.14	.13
C x T x S	2	.44	.73	.49
R x T	38	.61		